



# Southeast Fishery Bulletin

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## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

July 12, 2000  
NR00-039

## CATCH LIMITS FOR KING AND SPANISH MACKEREL

NOAA Fisheries recently has approved a number of changes in the catch specifications for king and Spanish mackerel. The approved catch specifications are summarized below. For specific information on the current regulations, interested persons should contact the Southeast Regional Office, or access the web page listed above.

### GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL

**Fishing Year** The fishing year for Gulf group king mackerel is July 1 through June 30, except for the run-around gillnet fishery (see below). Commercial seasons close when the respective quotas are met.

**TAC, Allocation, and Quota** The total allowable catch (TAC) for this group is 10.6 million pounds (MP). The recreational allocation is 7.21 MP, and the commercial quota is 3.39 MP.

**Bag Limits** The daily bag limit is 2 king mackerel per person, except for a zero-fish bag limit for captains and crews of for-hire vessels.

**New Subzones and Quotas** The Florida west coast subzone has been divided into a northern and southern area (see Figure 1). The northern area extends in Federal waters from the Alabama/Florida boundary to the Lee/Collier County line year-round. The southern area extends in Federal waters from the Lee/Collier County line to the Monroe/Miami-Dade County line (i.e., off Collier and Monroe counties) from November 1 through March 31, and from the Lee/Collier County line to the Collier/Monroe County line (i.e., off Collier County) from April 1 through October 31. A specific quota is in effect for each of the subzones (Table 1).

**Gillnet Fishery: Changes Affecting Operational Area and Fishing Season** The run-around gillnet fishery for Gulf group king mackerel is restricted to the Florida west coast southern area, and the fishery is subject to a new opening date. The fishery opens at 6:00 a.m. eastern standard time on the Tuesday following the Martin Luther King, Jr., holiday in January. The following weekend will be open if the quota has not been taken. All subsequent weekends and holidays will be closed. Weekend and holiday closures would be from 6:00 a.m. Saturday to 6:00 a.m. Monday, eastern standard time (or to Tuesday if Monday is a holiday). During these closures, a person aboard a vessel using or possessing a gillnet with a stretched-mesh size of 4.75 inches (12.1 cm) or larger in the Florida west coast subzone will not be allowed to fish for or possess Gulf group king mackerel.

**Commercial Trip Limits** Commercial trip limits for Gulf group king mackerel vary by season and area. See Table 1.

### ATLANTIC GROUP KING MACKEREL

**Fishing Year** The fishing year for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel is April 1 through March 31. For the area between the Volusia/Brevard and Miami-Dade/Monroe County boundaries, king mackerel are considered to be part of the Atlantic group from April 1 through October 31.

**TAC, Allocation, and Quota** The total allowable catch (TAC) for this group will increase from 8.4 MP to 10.0 MP, **effective August 2, 2000**. Under the 10.0 MP TAC, the recreational

allocation will be 6.29 MP, and the commercial quota will be 3.71 MP.

**Bag Limits** The recreational daily bag limit is 3 king mackerel per person from New York through Georgia, and 2 king mackerel per person off Florida.

**Commercial Trip Limit** Commercial trip limits for Atlantic migratory group king mackerel vary by season and area (see Table 1). For commercial vessels fishing for Atlantic group king mackerel between the Volusia/Brevard and Miami-Dade/Monroe County boundaries between April 1 and October 31, the trip limit is 50 fish, but **effective August 2, 2000**, will increase to 75 fish.

### GULF GROUP SPANISH MACKEREL

**TAC, Allocation, and Quota** The TAC for this group is 9.1 MP. The recreational allocation is 3.913 MP and the commercial quota is 5.187 MP.

**Bag Limit** The daily bag limit is 15 fish per person in federal waters of the Gulf from Florida through Texas.

### ATLANTIC GROUP SPANISH MACKEREL

**TAC, Allocation, and Quota** The TAC for this group will increase to 7.04 MP, **effective August 2, 2000**. The recreational allocation will be 3.17 MP, and the commercial quota will be 3.87 MP.

**Bag Limit** The daily bag limit is currently 10 fish per person. **Effective August 2, 2000**, the bag limit will increase to 15 fish per person in federal waters from New York through southeast Florida.

**Commercial Trip Limits** The daily trip limit off the Florida east coast is 1,500 pounds from April 1 through August 1. **Effective August 2, 2000**, the trip limit regime for the fishery off the Florida east coast will be simplified (see Table 1). **Effective August 2, 2000**, for the first part of the fishing year (Stage I), the daily trip limit will be 3,500 pounds from April 1 to November 31. Beginning December 1 (Stage II), unlimited daily harvest is allowed on Monday through Friday, with a 1,500 pound trip limit on Saturday and Sunday. When 75 percent of the adjusted quota is taken (Stage III), trip limits reduce to 1,500 pounds. Once the adjusted quota is met (Stage IV), trip limits are further reduced 500 pounds for the remainder of the fishing year.

## FOR ALL AREAS

**Retention and Sale of Cut-Off (damaged) king and Spanish mackerel** To reduce waste in the commercial fisheries, possession of cut-off (damaged) king or Spanish mackerel that comply with the minimum size limits and the trip limits will be allowed in the Gulf, Mid-Atlantic, or South Atlantic EEZ. Sale of such cut-off fish will be allowed. This is in addition to the existing allowance for possession and retention of a maximum of five cut-off (damaged) king mackerel that are not subject to the size limits or trip limits, but that cannot be sold or purchased, nor counted against the trip limit.

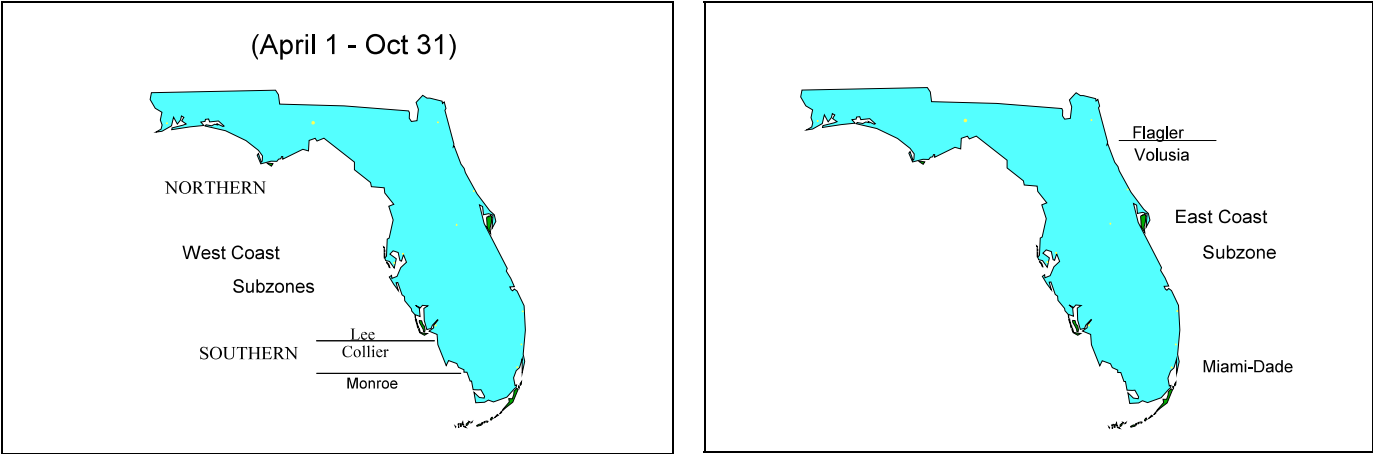
**Size Limits** The minimum size limit for king mackerel is 24 inches, and 12 inches for Spanish mackerel.

**Table 1. Mackerel Catch Specifications.** Total Allowable Catch (TAC), recreational allocations, commercial quota, daily bag limits, trip limits and fishing years for the various mackerel fisheries of the South Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico. All quantities are in pounds (MP equals millions of pounds) except where noted as numbers of fish. Bag limits are in numbers of fish per person per day. Recent regulation changes for king and Spanish mackerel stocks in the South Atlantic which become effective August 2, 2000, are in ***bold italics***.

|  | TAC                                | COMMERCIAL<br>QUOTA | COMMERCIAL<br>TRIP LIMITS     | CURRENT<br>FISHING YEAR        | RECREATIONAL<br>ALLOCATION | DAILY<br>BAG LIMITS          |
|--|------------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------|
| <u>KING MACKEREL</u>                               |                                    |                     |                               |                                |                            |                              |
| <b>Atlantic Group</b>                              | <b>10,000,000</b>                  | <b>3,710,000</b>    |                               |                                | <b>6,290,000</b>           |                              |
| NY to Flagler/Volusia County                       |                                    |                     | 3,500                         | Apr 1 - Mar 31                 |                            | 3:NY-GA                      |
| Flagler/Volusia to Volusia/Brevard                 |                                    |                     | 3,500                         | Apr 1 - Oct 31                 |                            | 2:FL                         |
| Volusia/Brevard to Miami-Dade/Monroe               |                                    |                     | 50 fish                       | Apr 1 - Aug 1                  |                            |                              |
| <b><i>Volusia/Brevard to Miami-Dade/Monroe</i></b> |                                    |                     | <b><i>75 fish</i></b>         | <b><i>Aug 2 - Oct 31</i></b>   |                            |                              |
| Florida Keys (Monroe County)                       |                                    |                     | 1,250                         | Apr 1 - Oct 31                 |                            |                              |
| <b>Gulf Group</b>                                  | 10,600,000                         | 3,390,000           |                               | Jul 1 - Jun 30                 | 7,210,000                  | 2:TX-FL<br>0:Capt/crew For-  |
| Hire   |                                    |                     |                               |                                |                            |                              |
| Western Zone (TX-AL)                               |                                    | 1,050,000           | 3,000                         | Jul 1 - Jun 30                 |                            |                              |
| Eastern Zone (FL)                                  |                                    | 2,340,000           |                               |                                |                            |                              |
| East Coast Subzone                                 |                                    | 1,082,250           | 50 fish                       | Nov 1 - Mar 31                 |                            |                              |
| West Coast Subzone                                 |                                    |                     |                               |                                |                            |                              |
| Northern Hook-and-Line                             |                                    | 175,500             | 1,250 <sup>1</sup>            | Jul 1 - Jun 30                 |                            |                              |
| Southern   |                                    |                     |                               |                                |                            |                              |
| Hook-and-Line                                      |                                    | 541,125             | 1,250 <sup>1</sup>            | Jul 1 - Jun 30                 |                            |                              |
| Gillnet  |                                    | 541,125             | 25,000                        | Jan <sup>2</sup> - Jun 30      |                            |                              |
| <u>SPANISH MACKEREL</u>                            |                                    |                     |                               |                                |                            |                              |
| <b>Atlantic Group</b>                              | <b>7,040,000</b>                   | <b>3,870,000</b>    |                               |                                | <b>3,170,000</b>           | 10:NY-FL (4/1-8/1)           |
| Northern (NY-GA)                                   |                                    |                     | 3,500                         |                                |                            | <b><i>15:NY-FL (8/2-</i></b> |
|  |                                    |                     |                               |                                | <b><i>3/31)</i></b>        |                              |
| Southern (FL)                                      | Stage I                            |                     | 1,500                         | Apr 1 - Aug. 1                 |                            |                              |
|  | <b><i>Stage I</i></b>              |                     | <b><i>3,500</i></b>           | <b><i>Aug 2 - Nov 30</i></b>   |                            |                              |
|  | <b><i>Stage II<sup>3</sup></i></b> |                     | <b><i>Unlimited (M-F)</i></b> | <b><i>Dec 1 - 2.715 MP</i></b> |                            |                              |
|  |                                    |                     | <b><i>1,500 (Sat-Sun)</i></b> |                                |                            |                              |
|  | <b><i>Stage III</i></b>            |                     | <b><i>1,500</i></b>           | <b><i>2.715 MP-3.62 MP</i></b> |                            |                              |
|  | <b><i>Stage IV</i></b>             |                     | <b><i>500</i></b>             | <b><i>3.620 MP-3.87 MP</i></b> |                            |                              |
| <b>Gulf Group</b>                                  | 9,100,000                          | 5,187,000           |                               | Apr 1 - Mar 31                 | 3,913,000                  | 15:TX-FL                     |

1 When 75% of the quota is taken, the trip limit is reduced to 500 pounds until the quota is met  
2 Fishery opens at 6:00 a.m. local time the Tuesday following the Martin Luther King, Jr. Holiday  
3 During Stage II, Spanish mackerel taken in compliance with the trip limit schedule and retained on a vessel terminating a trip prior to 6:00 a.m. will not be considered in possession, provided the vessel is not underway after 6:00 a.m. and the fish are unloaded prior to 6:00 p.m. that same day.

**FIGURE 1. GULF GROUP KING MACKEREL SEASONAL BOUNDARIES**



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